



February 2, 2015

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CIF Enacts New Protocol to Advance Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention in California High Schools

Sacramento, CA – The Eric Paredes Save A Life Foundation partnered with the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to enact new training and education protocol on Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) prevention to help protect California’s youth from the number one killer of student-athletes.

On January 30, the CIF Federated Council voted unanimously to amend CIF Bylaws 22.B.(9) and 503 to include language that adds SCA training to coach certification and practice and game protocol that empowers coaches to remove from a play a student-athlete who exhibits fainting—the number one warning sign of a potential heart condition.

A student-athlete who has been removed from play after displaying signs or symptoms associated with SCA may not return to play until he or she is evaluated and cleared by a licensed health care provider. To help educate parents and student-athletes about SCA warning signs and risk factors, an information sheet will be signed annually by the parent, guardian or caregiver and their student-athletes.

“We must always take positive steps forward that are in the best interest of our student-athletes, especially when it comes to protecting their health and minimizing risks and injuries,” said CIF Executive Director, Roger L. Blake. “Thanks to our partnership with the Eric Paredes Save A Life Foundation we are able to raise awareness, educate and provide much needed information on SCA to all those involved in education-based athletics in California.”

Costs to implement the new protocol are minimal as all materials, including the online education and training class, are being provided for free by the Eric Paredes Save A Life Foundation and Simon’s Fund, a sister foundation advancing SCA prevention across the country. Please visit www.cifstate.org and the SCA Section under Sport Medicine for more information. Recently, state legislatures in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Maryland, Connecticut and Delaware have implemented similar SCA prevention requirements in their states, with similar proposals pending in Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, New York, Massachusetts and Washington.

“While SCA often has no warning signs, a study published by the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine (2012) revealed that 72% of students who suffered from SCA were reported by their parents to have at least one cardiovascular symptom before SCA. They just didn’t recognize it as life threatening,” said Maureen Legg, Executive Director of the Eric Paredes Save A Life Foundation. “We are thrilled to be working hand-in-hand with CIF to educate parents, students and coaches about SCA warning signs and risk factors and to provide training to combat these dangers.”

SCA is not a heart attack. It’s an abnormality in the heart’s electrical system or structure that abruptly stops the heartbeat. It’s fatal in 92 percent of cases if not properly treated within minutes. Thousands of kids die annually in the U.S. from undetected heart conditions. SCA is 60% more likely to occur during physical activity and athletes are at greater risk.

About CIF

The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) was created in 1914 and is the governing body for high school sports in the state of California. CIF is uniquely positioned to foster student growth in values and ethics. CIF's ideal of "Pursuing Victory with Honor_{sm}," provides the opportunity to influence the actions of the athletic community. CIF strives to promote equity, quality, character and academic development. CIF is a nonprofit federation and the state office, located in Sacramento, CA, represents the interests of its member Sections. The 10 Sections represent geographic regions within the state: Central, Central Coast, Los Angeles City, North Coast, Northern, Oakland, Sac-Joaquin, San Diego, San Francisco and Southern. CIF represents more than 1,500 public and private member schools and more than 760,000 student-athletes. CIF conducts Regional and State Championships in cross country, football, volleyball, tennis, wrestling, basketball, soccer, swimming & diving, track & field and golf. CIF Sections conduct championships in more than 22 sports.

About EP Save A Life

Established to honor the Steele Canyon High School athlete who lost his life at 15 to SCA in 2009, Eric's Foundation strives to educate parents, educators, physicians and elected officials on the prevalence of SCA among teens. Established in 2010, the non-profit foundation had provided more than 14,000 free cardiac screenings to teens, finding 1 in 100 at risk from an undetected heart condition. The foundation's ultimate goal is to standardize cardiac screenings among youth, and equip schools with readily accessible automated external defibrillators (AED) with CPR/AED training for students and staff. For more information, visit EPSaveALife.org.

The Eric Paredes Save A Life Foundation is a proud member of Parent Heart Watch, the national voice on sudden cardiac arrest prevention in the young.

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